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The Fragments of Empedocles. Translated into English verse by WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co. 1908. Pp. viii + 92.

This translation of the "Fragments of Empedocles" deserves credit for the extent to which it preserves the exact meaning, together with the beauty and power of the original. The translator is primarily a literary workman attracted to Empedocles as poet. Yet a careful study of Empedocles as philosopher is made the basis of the work, and in a general introduction and explanatory notes following the text the needs of students of philosophy are sufficiently kept in view so that the book will be a useful manual for the study of Empedocles.

A poetic rendering of the fragments, if ably executed, is, in an important respect, a better basis for their interpretation than the most painstaking prose translation. If, by the retention of the poetic form in which the writings "On Nature" and "The Purifications" were originally cast, the translator enables us to fall imaginatively into the spirit of their conception, he has given a considerable aid towards their correct appreciation. Apart from the general inadequacy of translations, we discover in the best prose versions of the fragments an ineffectiveness due to our recognition that the texture of Empedocles's thought is poetic. The philosopher brings to view a world drama, with love and strife in alternate ascendancy; a panorama of cosmic activities, where organic life arises under striking, almost spectacular conditions. Empedocles has a method of explanation that is essentially poetic. In exact reasoning he is not the equal of other early Greek thinkers, while he excels in the variety and vital quality of his thought. Even his so-called anticipations of science attest the daring imagination of one temperamentally a poet. It is for this reason that by producing a strong and dignified rendering of the fragments in English verse, Dr. Leonard has performed a more significant service for the study of Empedocles than the translator ordinarily achieves.

The general fidelity to the original is closer than would be foreseen as possible under the conditions of metrical form. The Greek text of each fragment accompanying its translation offers a ready means of check where departures have been necessary for clearness or adaptation to poetic requirements. Besides unessential variances by which the meaning is not affected, in a few important passages a free rendering is made which might give rise to misconception. But literal translations are usually given in the notes. In Fragment 6, *τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων βιζώματα* appears in translation, "the fourfold root of all things." *ταῦτα*, by which Empedocles makes facile reference to the primordial four, is rendered "the elements," by supplying *στοιχεῖα*, a term nowhere used by Empedocles. In the translation of Fragment 21, there is an obscurity not occasioned by a difficulty of the text in the line "Aught that behooves the elemental forms."

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